MINNEAPOLIS PARKS FOUNDATION

2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

Who We Are

Mission

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation transforms human lives through parks and public spaces by aligning philanthropic investment and community vision.

Vision

Great parks make great neighborhoods, and great neighborhoods weave together into great cities. While celebrating all the varied benefits of Minneapolis' nationally renowned and locally treasured system, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation focuses on elevating the capacity of our parks to deliver the following outcomes, which can only be fully realized through robust private/public partnerships:

ADVANCE EQUITY AND CULTURAL INCLUSION: When all people have access to valued parks and public spaces, feel welcome, and see themselves reflected in those spaces, a community is healthier, safer, and happier.

FOSTER COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING: Parks provide healthy air, water, and soil, and places to play and exercise, on both the individual and community level. Parks also provide places where we can learn about our neighbors and form new and deeper connections.

DEEPEN CONNECTIONS TO THE NATURAL WORLD: In our increasingly urbanized world, maintaining places of natural beauty, respite, and awe helps us maintain our humanity.

STRENGTHEN CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCY: Cities must adapt and develop new methods to protect and restore natural systems and clean water and to mitigate the economic impact of climate change.

SPARK ECONOMIC VITALITY: Thriving parks and public spaces can attract investment and bring prosperity to the broader community without sparking displacement.

How We Work

The Foundation's primary means of generating impact is by raising and directing philanthropic investment. It engages where philanthropy can play a necessary role, is in support of community objectives, and is in alignment with MPRB priorities. It uses a variety of giving vehicles to ensure everyone has the opportunity to meaningfully participate in park philanthropy.

The Foundation's fundraising capacity is enhanced by complementary activities that include organizing park advocates, public programming and events, storytelling about park impact, and continual engagement with park users, community, philanthropic partners, and public sector leaders to align vision and priorities.

MPRB PARTNERSHIP: The Foundation is a closely aligned but independent partner to the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board (MPRB). The Foundation welcomes guidance from the MPRB while also leveraging private sector expertise to inform and shape MPRB priorities and practices. The Foundation sets its own priorities, in accordance with its board-directed mission, vision, and selection criteria.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: In setting priorities, the Foundation seeks to understand the perspectives of communities and interest groups affected by its decisions. To do so, the Foundation strives to reflect the whole of the city in its board, staff, and partnerships; actively listens and learns from diverse stakeholders; and is attentive to power dynamics that minimize certain voices in public discourse. The Foundation champions inclusive participation in park usage, planning, and philanthropy.

Where We Are & Where We Are Headed

The overarching call to action of the Foundation's 2023-2027 strategic plan is to establish the Minneapolis Park system as one of our community's leading philanthropic priorities, in alignment with the parks' value to our city and residents. As a result, our parks will more fully realize their capacity for transformative community benefit.

This is the moment for a bold vision. Our parks have been a treasured Minneapolis asset for nearly 140 years, but the quality of our parks, and the scale of historic investment in our parks, is inequitably distributed across the city and between neighborhoods. In addition, people are increasingly recognizing parks can – and demanding parks must – make our city healthier and more inclusive by advancing social cohesion, equitable communities, safety, economic opportunity, climate resilience, and opportunities for youth. The Minneapolis Parks Foundation must grow in sync with community expectations for great parks.

Minneapolis Park Philanthropy in 2027

- Park support is widely recognized as a priority within the Minneapolis philanthropic sector.
- The Minneapolis Parks Foundation is widely recognized as the primary philanthropic partner for Minneapolis parks, minimizing confusion, leveraging generosity, and accelerating action.
- Philanthropic investment flows at a scale, and in a diversity of forms, that allows our park system to deliver even greater outcomes for everyone.
- Everyone who wants to contribute to the parks can contribute meaningfully.
- The Minneapolis Parks Foundation maintains a robust portfolio of funding opportunities ranging from small wins and mid-sized projects to transformative initiatives.
- Ongoing conversations, facilitated in part by the Foundation, between public sector leadership, community members, and philanthropic partners results in alignment of priorities and transformative action.
- A park endowment has emerged as a compelling opportunity for people who seek to make gifts in perpetuity.

How We Will Get There

1. Generate $100 million of new philanthropic investment for our parks over the next 10 years in forms that complement public funding, deliver the greatest benefit to our community, and help lead to a more equitable park system.
2. Within a city that loves its parks, activate a movement of park system champions, supporters, funders, and advocates so that we have the collective power to advance our mission of transforming human lives through parks and public spaces.
3. Invest in the organizational infrastructure and capacity needed to fulfill the Foundation's role as the park system's primary philanthropic partner.